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ABSTRACT

A brief research project on some special needs and problems of black students at Chabot College (California) grew out of the 1969-70 violent climate of ethnic student activism. Twenty-five black and 25 white students completed both the Mooney Problem Check List and the Personal Integration Scale of the Omnibus Personality Inventory. Significant differences between blacks and whites were found in the problem areas of finances, living conditions, employment, and general lethargy. Dissemination of the results of this survey to faculty, counselors, and trustees created an awareness of these special problems so the college can, hopefully, better meet the needs of its minority students. (CA)

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BLACK COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS HAVE SPECIAL PROBLEMS. WHAT ARE THESE SPECIAL PROBLEMS?

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Black Community College Students Have Special Problems.
What Are These Special Problems?
A Research Project At One Community College Finds Some Of The Answers
By Carolyn Greene and Donald L. Kester

To begin with, mention should be made of some of the events that sparked this research effort. As is now well known, the academic year of 1968-69 was a turbulent one for many colleges. Ethnic minority groups led the siege against the status quo. Chabot College in Hayward, California felt this press for dramatic change. Administrators at the college felt that the total faculty should be aware of the startling developments. Accordingly, several speakers who either knew the attitudes of the active students, or actually were active students, were scheduled to address several all-faculty meetings at the college. What would later be recognized as a familiar press from ethnic minorities began to emerge. There were demands for the establishment of an Ethnic Studies Division. There were demands that "Third World People" be employed at the teaching, counseling, and administrative levels. Peaceful marches were held to dramatize opposition to the status quo -- which was judged by some to be at least somewhat "racist". Groups of students marched around the administration building. Later, groups of students held a "sit-in" in the administration building. While some strong language had been used, this stage of the confrontation had remained on the whole peaceful. Then a new phase began. Fire alarms began to sound. Faculty and students responded by leaving the buildings. At first no fires were found. The ringing of the bells served to harass the status quo. But then when activists believed change was not coming about fast enough,

some fires were actually started in trash cans in the rest rooms.

Within a few months the faculty and administration had been faced with the kind of student activism that up until this time had been largely confined to The University of California at Berkeley, Columbia, and a few other major universities. Suddenly faculty and administration were confronted with acts of disruptions and "demands" for change.

It was out of this climate that the need for this research became apparent. Student activists demanded that the college change to better satisfy their needs. Interested faculty and administrators willingly gave of their free time to try to meet some of the demands. The efforts became organized under the rubric of "Meeting the Unique and Special Needs" of these students.

As the smoke began to clear, the obvious question began to be asked: "What <u>are</u> their unique and special needs?" Finally, after a board of trustees meeting, a board member asked what hard data there was available on this most urgent question. This is when the two present authors began thinking together about how two investigators might research this question. After much discussion, the research question became, "What are some of the special problems these students have?" Initially two ethnic minorities were contacted; the black, and the Chicano. The Mooney Problem Check List published by The Psychological Corporation was to be the objective instrument used. The research design called for the Problem Check List to be given to representative samples of three groups: the black students, the Chicano students, and the "others". The black students agreed to fill out the Check List but the representatives of the Chicano students declined. The fact that the latter group declined may indicate the degree to which this leadership was unsure of the true intentions of the research effort. The feeling of having been victimized by the status quo was very pervasive at

this time. This same hesitance was visible in the attitudes of some of the black students who were contacted but there was sufficient trust in the good intentions that were expressed to allow the research project to compare the problems of Black students and the problems of white students. As mentioned, the Mooney Problem Check List was to be given to both groups. It was decided that the Personal Integration (PI) scale of the Omnibus Personality Inventory (OPI) would be another appropriate scale.

At the time of the research study, early 1970, the two present authors were instructor-counselors at Chabot. Two additional instructor-counselors volunteered to help. They were Mr. Bob Forrester and Mr. Marvin Thompson. A group of twenty-five (25) Black students completed both the Mooney and the PI scale as did a group of twenty-five (25) white students.

The Mooney Problem Check List has the following scales:

1. Health and Physical Development (HPD)
2. Finances, Living Conditions, and Employment (FLE)
3. Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)
4. Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)
5. Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)
6. Courtship, Sex, and Marriage (CSM)
7. Home and Family (HF)
8. Morals and Religion (MR)
9. Adjustment to College (School) Work (ACW) (ASW)
10. The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)
11. Curriculum and Teaching Procedure (CTP)
12. Total

Statistically the following was tested: $H_o: W_B = W_w$ against $H_1: W_B \neq W_w$ where W_B is the population mean number of problems checked by Black students and W_w is the population mean number of problems checked by white students. A "T" test was used to test this same H_o for each of the above listed twelve scales. Statistically significant differences were found on the second problem area "Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)". It was decided that all of the individual items in the Problem

Check List should be statistically tested too. The following Problems in the FLE Scale were found to be checked statistically more often by Black students. (Each of these is significant at or beyond the .05 level).

Too little money for clothes*
Going through school on too little money*
Family worried about finances*
Transportation or commuting difficulty*
Too little money for recreation*

Throughout the rest of the Problem Check List, Black students indicated they had more problems than white students in the following: (Each is significant at or beyond the .05 level).

Needing a job during vacation*
Deciding whether to leave college for a job*
Slow in reading*
Having bad luck*
Parents divorced or separated*
Finding it difficult to relax*
Wanting part-time experiences in my field*
Lacking necessary experience for a job*
Parents expecting too much of me*
Disappointment in a love affair*
Wanting more freedom at home*
Not telling parents everything*
Being treated like a child at home*

The following Problem Check List items were significant at the .01 level:

Campus activities poorly coordinated**
Campus lacking in School Spirit**

The results of the PI scale of the OPI showed no significant difference between the way the black students and the white students answered the scale. However one item on the scale was answered differently: (This is significant at the .05 level).

I have had periods of days, weeks, or months when I couldn't take care of things because I couldn't "get going".*

Conclusion

It is clear that at the time of the study there were problems that students of color were having that were different from those problems that other students had. As believed, Black students did have "unique and special" problems that deserved rapid attention. The results of this institutional research was disseminated to the faculty through an accreditation self-study under Mrs. Greene's direction; it was given to the counselors in their staff meetings; and it was presented to the board of trustees.

Hopefully, this is an example of how institutional research can serve the needs of all the groups within the college community.